

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 07704 141226Z

ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 H-01 MCT-01
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P 141215Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0440

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USMISSION SINAI

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 07704

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PLO, UR

SUBJECT: PLO REPRESENTATION IN MOSCOW

REF: STATE 91578

1. THE PLO OPENED A PERMANENT OFFICE IN MOSCOW IN JUNE 1976. THE OFFICE IS ACCREDITED TO THE SOVIET COMMITTEE FOR SOLIDARITY WITH THE COUNTRIES OF ASIA AND AFRICA (SKSSAA). THE "PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE", MOHAMMAD ASH-SHA'IR, CONSIDERS HIMSELF TO HAVE THE EQUIVALENT OF AMBASSADORIAL RANK AND THE SOVIETS CATER TO THIS FEELING, ALLOWING HIM, FOR EXAMPLE, TO FLY THE "PALESTINIAN FLAG" FROM HIS CAR. HE AND HIS STAFF ARE ALLOWED DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES SUCH AS DUTY-FREE ENTRY OF GOODS AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 07704 141226Z

ACCESS TO HARD CURRENCY "D" COUPONS FOR USE IN SELECT SOVIET STORES. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES ENJOYED BY THE PLO STAFF NOR DO WE KNOW ON WHICH PASSPORTS THEY RELY.

2. ASH-SHA'IR'S STAFF CONSISTS OF AT LEAST TWO OFFICERS AND TWO OR THREE SECRETARIES. THE NUMBER TWO MAN IS A

FORMER LEBANESE JOURNALIST NAMED FAYSAL HURRANI. WE DO NOT KNOW IF THE STAFF MEMBERS ALSO REPRESENT COMPONENT ORGANIZATIONS OF THE PLO ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THAT POSSIBILITY. ACCORDING TO THE KNOWLEDGEABLE FRENCH POLITICAL COUNSELOR ALBERT TUROT, THE SECRETARIES IN THE OFFICE SEEMED TO BE MORE THAN JUST CLERK-TYPISTS, I.E., THEY HAVE SOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PALESTINIAN STUDENTS, PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES, AND THE LIKE. ACCORDING TO TUROT, THE OFFICE ALSO UTILIZES THE VOLUNTEER LABOR OF MANY OF THE PALESTINIAN STUDENTS IN MOSCOW.

3. THE OFFICE OCCUPIES FOUR ROOMS ON THE 12TH FLOOR OF THE BUILDING AT 148 LENINSKIY PROSPEKT. THIS BUILDING HOUSES A NUMBER OF FOREIGNERS INCLUDING SOME AMERICANS. THE TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE OFFICE IS 434-6778. ASH'SHA'IR HAS SPOKEN OF MOVING TO A LARGER OFFICE ON ARBAT ULITSA. THIS WOULD BE A VERY DESIRABLE LOCATION IN THE CENTER OF TOWN AND VERY NEAR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA).

4. THE MFA DOES NOT HAVE AN OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH THE PLO OFFICE HERE, BUT THERE IS A DESK OFFICER (FIRST SECRETARY IGOR' GEORGEVICH IVASHCHENKO) IN THE NEAR EAST COUNTRIES DEPT. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ISRAEL, JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS.

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 07704 141226Z

5. IT IS EXTREMELY LIKELY THAT THE PLO OFFICE MAINTAINS A CLOSE LIAISON WITH THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CC CPSU. TOON

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